

To: R2 EPA Region 2 (EPA Staff)[R2_EPA_Region_2_EPA_Staff@epa.gov]
From: Epton, Carlton
Sent: Tue 8/16/2016 2:08:04 PM
Subject: PFOA/PFOS Clips

Montclair purchases PFOA removal unit for trial

North Jersey.Com

By Nicholas Katzban

August 15, 2016, 1:38 PM

A trial run to test the efficacy of a carbon absorption system to remove perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) from the township's drinking water will commence, but the exact date depends.

According to Montclair Water Bureau Director Gary Obszarny, concrete has been poured for the site at the Glenfield Water Well, but he still has to wait for the arrival of the carbon absorption towers, as well as a crane to install them.

"It should be within the next two weeks," said Obszarny.

The system uses carbon to absorb PFOA. When the carbon is removed during filtration, so is the chemical.

The most recent test revealed PFOA presence at 43 parts per trillion in Montclair's drinking water, but previous results showed 48 ppt.

While the state Department of Environmental Protection has its guidance levels set at 40 ppt, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has a guidance level of 70 ppt, and as Obszarny noted, a "guidance level" is just that.

"There is no maximum contamination level. So, we're not even sure we have to treat it," he said, regarding language that would stipulate an official level of danger for PFOA presence. He noted that New Jersey is not required to have the same guidance as federal levels, but that its number can only ever be the same or lower than the EPA's, never higher.

He said that there is no harm in over-treating the water, and that the carbon system may remove other volatile organic compounds that the township is not aware of, or concerned about now, but could become an issue down the road.

"We're being proactive about it," Obszarny said.

Of course, that proactive spirit comes at a price.

The cost of installing the system at the Glenfield Well is about \$270,000, and total costs will likely come to approximately \$300,000, but that does not take the added cost of sampling the water into account, which Obszarny couldn't estimate.

The vendor for the system is Calgon Carbon, the lone company to offer a bid to the township. Obszarny affirmed that there is no alternative system available, as carbon absorption is the only proven method for removing PFOA.

"I talked to the State of New Jersey, other water companies, and everyone said everything out there points to carbon for this treatment," said Obszarny.

Vice president of the Calgon Municipal Business Unit, and a member of its perfluorinated compounds task force, Nora Stockhausen, told The Montclair Times that a reverse osmosis method is being researched for the removal of PFCs, but that the energy-intensive process is costly, and that it creates a higher concentration of PFOA waste.

With Montclair's PFOA level well below federal guidance, the objective is to bring that number down to a "non-detect level," at which its presence would not be observable by any known test, although that may not mean the compounds are gone completely, but at such a low parts per trillion, they are sure to be benign.

Despite experts and industry expectations of the system's efficacy, a trial run is still necessary.

"The public may think, 'what's the big problem, just add a filter.' It's not anyway near that simple," said Township Sustainability Officer Gray Russell. "The filter might take out other things that protect us as well."

Stockhausen said that the carbon could remove some chlorine along with the PFOA, but suggested that the change should be negligible.

Obszarny said he'll be monitoring the trial closely, testing samples for three months. Once those tests show a non-detectable level, he'll install a second system, most likely at the Lorraine Avenue Well.

"I know we bought the right system, but test results are what we are looking for," he said, then added, "I never would have recommended it, and the state never would have approved it, if it wasn't proven technology."

Following Superfund Declaration For Stewart ANG Base, What's Next?

WAMC

By Allison Dunne

August 15, 2016

Following Friday's declaration of Stewart Air National Guard base in Newburgh a state Superfund site, people are wondering what's next.

The New York state Department of Environmental Conservation declared Stewart Air National Guard Base a Superfund site some three months after the public learned of PFOS contamination in the main source of drinking water for Newburgh – Washington Lake. The next step, according to DEC acting Deputy Commissioner of Environmental Remediation and Materials Martin Brand, was to identify the U.S. Department of Defense as a potentially responsible party for the contamination detected in the area, asking them help fully investigate the site, determine the nature and extent of contamination, and start developing any interim remedial actions or full remedial plan.

In a statement, an Air Force spokesman says, "The Air Force has a long history of working with communities under the Superfund process to address environmental issues and protect human health and the environment. We will continue to collaborate with regulators to address the issue."

Then there's what comes next after that. For Newburgh City Manager Michael Ciaravino, a primary concern is discharging the contaminated water from Washington Lake. Here he is speaking just three days before the Superfund declaration.

"In other situations, we know this firsthand, that the DEC would require a capture, pre-treatment, before release," Ciaravino says. "And so the direction we're asking for is, in order to pump this water out, do we need to pre-treat it and, if so, please give us the guidance as well as the resources to do that. We don't want to dump PFOS into the Moodna Creek and affect drinking wells possibly downstream from us."

The DEC's Brand says the state's Superfund program can be brought to bear here.

"We're working with the city to evaluate options for drawing down Lake Washington and we'll continue to work with the city to address those concerns. We haven't come up with a full plan yet for that but we're working on that," says Brand. "The expenses associated with that and, of course, the construction and maintenance of the filtration system for the water treatment plant is right now being covered by the state. Of course, we will seek to have the responsible parties come up with those costs in the future. And, again, as the investigations continue into the nature and extent we'll be developing further remediation plans, including any interim remedial measures to address the contamination and we'll keep working with the city on those."

Ciaravino says a forecast rainy season has him concerned the lake could overflow and he's worried about spending \$300,000 on the following.

“We are about to purchase diesel pumps for Washington Lake because as we no longer use Washington Lake for our fresh water, the water level here rises,” Ciaravino says. “Our fire chief has advised that we need to preemptively reduce the level so that we don’t risk a spillover with the high hazard Class c earthen dam that’s over 150 years old.”

The city now draws water from the Catskill Aqueduct, paid for by the state. Meanwhile, Riverkeeper spokesman Cliff Weathers sees the following as next steps.

“The next logical step is to take care of the residents there and to call for blood testing to see the PFOS exposure that the residents may have and the second step is actually to try to restore the watershed,” Weathers says.

In January, the Saint-Gobain facility in Hoosick Falls was declared a state Superfund site. Residents have since been blood tested and a state Senate field hearing is scheduled for August 30. Again, Weathers.

“So we use Hoosick Falls as the reference point of why you should be testing for toxins such as PFOA and PFOS,” Weathers says. “There’s many more sites in the United States outside of these two sites that they’re finding elevated levels of these chemicals and I think that’s something that should be looked at very carefully by state governments and also by the federal government.”

A state Department of Health spokesperson says in a statement, “The State is actively seeking technical guidance from the federal Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) regarding the feasibility and potential public health benefits of launching a blood testing program in the City of Newburgh. Should the facts support moving forward with blood testing, we will be formally requesting financial support from our federal partners, including the Department of Defense as a Responsible Party.”

The Superfund site declaration was the latest action to come out of Governor Andrew Cuomo’s Water Quality Rapid Response Team.

Six Million Americans Have This Toxic Chemical In Their Drinking Water

Gizmodo

Maddie Stone

August 15, 2016

You might want to reconsider drinking the water next time you visit the States: A new Harvard study has found that six million Americans drink water containing unsafe levels of obscure industrial pollutants associated with cancer and other severe health consequences.

The chemicals, called polyfluoroalkyl and perfluoroalkyl substances (PFASs), repel both oil and water and are used in a wide range of commercial products, from paint to clothing to nonstick cookware. Although the entire family of PFASs is poorly studied, two of them — perfluorooctanesulfonic acid (PFOS) and perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) — are linked to health problems including high cholesterol, immune deficiency, hormone disruption, kidney and testicular cancer.

“These compounds are not regulated,” Xindi Hu, lead author of the study published today in *Environmental Science & Technology Letters* told Gizmodo. “We are looking at a big family, and the EPA only monitors a few of them.”

To understand the distribution of these harmful toxins in the environment, Hu and her colleagues analysed EPA data on six PFAS compounds that are actively monitored across 4864 water supplies in 33 US states. Overall, the researchers found elevated PFAS levels in 194 water supplies. Of these, 66 water supplies contained levels of PFOS and PFOA exceeding the EPA safe drinking limit of 70 parts per trillion.

Newark, New Jersey’s water supply was one of the most contaminated, with a whopping 1800 parts per trillion of dangerous PFAS compounds. Warminster, Pennsylvania was also in pretty bad shape, with PFAS levels of nearly 350 parts per trillion. In total, the PFAS-contaminated water supplies evaluated in the study serve six million Americans.

Hu’s analysis revealed that water supplies near industrial sites, military bases where firefighting foam is used and wastewater treatment plants were more likely to be contaminated. But broader geographic patterns were pretty sketchy, owing in part to the fact that nearly a third of the US population drinks water with no government PFAS data whatsoever.

“We are trying to help the EPA identify areas for future study, where data is lacking,” Hu said. “If this dataset was nationwide, that could allow more detailed recommendations in individual areas.”

Hu and her co-authors are continuing to study the long-term health effects of PFAS exposure. Another Harvard-led study, published last week in *Environmental Health Perspectives*, found that individuals from the Faroe islands who were exposed to PFAS compounds at a young age built up fewer antibodies to tetanus and diphtheria vaccines, suggesting long-term exposure can impair the development of a healthy immune system.

While the EPA continues to wrestle with how to implement long-overdue regulations for industrial pollutants, it has started issuing health advisories on a state and local level, prompting some communities to warn their residents off the water until a solution can be found. Unfortunately, most off-the-shelf household filters are not effective at removing PFAS chemicals, although activated carbon filters and reverse osmosis methods show potential, Hu said.

"I'd first encourage concerned citizens to talk to their local health department, to figure whether the level [of PFAS compounds] is very high," Hu said. "People have a right to know what's in their drinking water."

Petersburgh to Hire Environmental Attorney

Time Warner Cable News

By Web Staff

Monday, August 15, 2016 at 10:46 PM EDT

The town of Petersburg is hiring an environmental attorney as residents continue to deal with water contamination.

Members of the board unanimously approved a resolution at their meeting Monday night to hire the attorney. Petersburg has been dealing with PFOA contamination in the water supply since February. The state declared Taconic Plastics a superfund site in May, and Taconic is being held responsible for the contamination and cleanup.

"To make sure every base is covered, for the town of Petersburg, we felt it in the best interest of the town to get the kind of advice that they will provide to us," said Interim Supervisor Alan Webster.

Just last week, a leak in the water system forced the town to use a well that has PFOA levels above the EPA recommendation. Last month, people in Petersburg were able to undergo blood testing, to determine how much of the chemical is in their bodies.